

£100m funds to help business Applications open for lifeline support schemes.

A £100 million package of additional grant support for small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) and newly self-employed people opens for applications later today.

The three separate funds will be administered by local authorities and Scotland's enterprise agencies and will begin to pay out grants in early May.

They include a £34 million hardship fund for the newly self-employed, a £20 million fund for small and micro enterprises in the creative, tourism and hospitality sectors and £45 million for viable SMEs crucial to the Scottish economy which are vulnerable.

Economy Secretary Fiona Hyslop said: "Our economy has been hit hard by this crisis and previously profitable businesses have seen demand dry up overnight. Our support will help alleviate the hardship those individuals and companies are facing.

"I am particularly pleased that we will be able to help the newly self-employed who do not qualify for the UK's scheme and are facing financial hardship as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19).

"We also recognise the particular impact of COVID-19 on our creative, tourism and hospitality sectors at what would normally be their busiest period. This fund is intended to relieve the hardship of smaller firms that are ineligible for other forms of support.

"As well as dealing with this immediate crisis, we must look to the future. We must ensure that viable and vital businesses in all sectors with a part to play in strengthening the resilience of Scotland's economy survive this crisis and thrive in future, which is why £45 million is being allocated to support those firms.

"We continue to engage with businesses on a regular basis to understand their needs and press the UK Government to deliver for them."

Background:

Applicants can access these funds and more via the www.FindBusinessSupport.gov.scot website. All funds will be open for applications by 1400.

The funds which make up the £100 million support package are as follows:

- £34 million Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund, managed by Local Authorities, will be allocated to the newly self-employed who are ineligible for UK support (as they became self-employed since April 2019) but are facing hardship with £2,000 grants

- £20 million Creative, Tourism & Hospitality Enterprises Hardship Fund, managed by the Enterprise Agencies with support from Creative Scotland and VisitScotland for small and micro creative, tourism and hospitality companies not in receipt of business rates relief with grants of up to £25K.
- £45 million Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund, managed by the Enterprise Agencies providing bespoke grants and wrap around business support to viable but vulnerable SMEs who are vital to the local or national economic foundations of Scotland

The Scottish Government is also providing £1 million to top up Creative Scotland's Bridging Bursaries in the not-for-profit sector.